



**United States Attorney's Office
Eastern District of Michigan**

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PRESS RELEASE

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FORMER DETROIT LEAD INSPECTOR PLEADS GUILTY TO FRAUD

A former City of Detroit Health Department lead inspector pled guilty to wire fraud for abusing his official position, United States Attorney Barbara L. McQuade announced today.

McQuade was joined in the announcement by Randall K. Ashe, Special Agent in Charge of Environmental Protection Agency - Criminal Investigation Division, Region V, and Andrew Arena, Special Agent in Charge of the Detroit Division of the FBI.

Entering the plea before United States District Judge Patrick Duggan was Donald M. Patterson, age 49, of Detroit.

At today's plea hearing, Patterson stated that his job was to inspect Detroit homes in which small children lived, and in which it had been reported that there was an unsafe lead level. He was to ensure that all paint-based lead hazards were safely removed from those homes. He admitted that on about 10 occasions in 2008 and 2009 he accepted cash to either provide a clean bill of health to a suspect home in which he had done no inspection, or to provide fraudulent lead removal training to the person living at the home in question. Patterson acknowledged that proper and safe lead removal is a difficult process for which substantial training is required, and he admitted that he provided only the most cursory instructions, inadequate to safely remove lead hazards, in exchange for payments of \$200. Patterson acknowledged that he received

\$200 from the owner of a home on Junction in Detroit in July, 2009, in exchange for the fraudulent lead removal training.

Wire fraud, the charge to which Patterson pled guilty, carries a maximum penalty of five years in custody. Patterson faces 41-51 months in custody under the United States Sentencing Guidelines. No date has yet been set for sentencing.

United States Attorney McQuade stated, "This crime was particularly offensive because the defendant deliberately risked the health of young children in Detroit".

EPA Special Agent in Charge Ashe stated "The EPA's Criminal Investigation Division is committed to investigating all facets of environmental crimes. This plea is especially important given the impact of this individual's actions on the most vulnerable of victims, young children.

FBI Special Agent in Charge Arena said, "The health of children was put at risk for monetary gain. Individuals in positions of public trust, who endanger the health of the American public for their own benefit, will be will aggressively investigated by the FBI."

The Patterson case was investigated by special agents of the Environmental Protection Agency and FBI, with assistance from the City of Detroit and the State of Michigan. The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Lynn Helland.

Any Michigan resident who has concerns about possible lead hazards in his or her home should call the Michigan Department of Community Health Hotline at (800) 648-6942.

